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NEW-YORK WEEKLY TRIBUNE. A VERY LARGE PAPER, FOR THE COUNTRY. IS PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY MORNING. At the low price of TWO DOLLARS PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE.

THE TRIBUNE.

Review. FRENCH NOVELISTS OF THE DAY: BALZAC.....GEORGE SAND.....EUGENE SUE.

The thirteenth number of the "Wandering Jew," just published by Winchester, has delivered us from our anxieties as to the objects of Jesuit persecution, though by a coup de main clausier, than arranged for a few months more of content with the Society of Jesus, but we think our author must depend for interest during the last volume, no longer on the conduct of the plot, but on the portraiture of characters.

It is cheering to know how great is the influence such a writer as Sue exerts, from his energy of feeling on some subjects of moral interest. It is true that he has also much talent and a various experience of life; but writers who far surpass him here, as we think Balzac does, wanting this kind of faith, have no influence, except merely on the tastes of their readers.

We hear much lamentation among good people at the introduction of so many French novels among us, corrupting, they say, our youth by pictures of depraved vice and purulent crime, such as would never, otherwise, be dreamed of here, and corrupting it for the same reason that a boy may be more deeply injured by initiation into wickedness than a man, for he is not only robbed of his virtue, but prevented from developing the strength that might restore it. But it is useless to bewail what is the inevitable result of the movement of our time. Europe must pur her corruptions, no less than her riches, on our shores, and in our own community, a soul of goodness, a wise aspiration, that shall give us strength to assimilate this unwholesome food to better substance, or cast off its contaminations. A mighty sea of life swirls within our nation, and, if there be salt enough, foreign bodies shall not have power to breed infection there.

We have had some opportunity to observe that the worst works offered are rejected. On the steamboats we have seen translations of vile books, bought by those who did not know from the names of their authors what to expect, torn, and after a cursory glance at their contents, and scattered to the winds. Not even the all-but-all-powerful desire to get one's money's worth, since it had once been paid, could content against the blush of shame that rose on the cheek of the reader.

It would be desirable for our people to know something of these writers and of the position they occupy abroad; for the nature of their circulation, rather than its extent, might be the guide both to translator and buyer. The object of the first is generally money—the last, amusement. But the merest mercenary might prefer to pass his time in translating a good book, and our imitation of Europe does not yet go so far that the American milliner can be depended on to copy any thing from the Parisian grisette, except her cap.

One of the most unexceptionable and attractive writers of modern France is DE VIGNY. His life has been passed in the Army, but many years of peace have given him time for literary culture, while his acquaintance with the traditions of the Army, from the days of its dramatic achievements, both for narrative and reflection. His tales are written with infinite grace, refined sensibility, and a dignified view. His treatment of a subject shows that closeness of grasp and clearness of sight which are rarely attained by one who is not at home in active as well as thoughtful life. He has much penetration, too, and has touched some of the most delicate springs of human action. His works have been written in hours of leisure; this has diminished their number but given them many advantages over the thousands of professional writers that fill the coffee houses of Paris by day, and its garrets by night. We wish he would more read here in the original; with him would be found good French, and the manners, thoughts and feelings of a cosmopolitan gentleman. We have seen, with pleasure, one or two of his tales translated into the pages of the Democratic Review.

But the three who have been and will be most read here, as they occupy the first rank in their own country, are BALZAC, GEORGE SAND and EUGENE SUE.

BALZAC has been a very fruitful writer, and as he is fond of juggling's tricks of every description, and holds nothing earnest or sacred, he is vain of the wonderful celerity with which some of his works, and those quite as good as any, have been written. They seem to have been conceived, composed and written down with that degree of speed with which it is possible to lay pen to paper. Indeed, we think he cannot be surpassed in ready and sustained command of his resources. His almost unsurpassed quickness and fidelity of eye, both as to the disposition of external objects, and the symptoms of human passion, combined with a strong memory, have filled his mind with materials, and we doubt not that if his thoughts could be put into writing with the swiftness of thought, he would give us one of his novels every week in the year.

Here end our praises of Balzac; what he is, as a man, in daily life, we know not. He must, originally have had a heart, or he could not read so well the hearts of others; perhaps there are all private traits that touch him. But as a writer, he was the modern Molière, the spirit that denieth, more worthily represented than by Molière.

He takes up such an object carefully and puts it in a good light. But he has no hatred for what is loathsome, no contempt for what is base, no love for what is lovely, no faith in what is noble. To him there is no virtue and no vice; men and women are more or less finely organized; noble and tender conduct is more agreeable than the reverse, because it argues better health; that is all.

Not is there an intellectual calmness, nor from an unusual power of analyzing motives, and penetrating delusions merely; neither is there indifference. There is a touch of the demon, also, in Balzac; the cold but gayly familiar demon, and the smile of the amateur yields easily to a sneer, as he delights to show you on what foul juices the fair flower was fed. He is a thorough and willing materialist. The trace of Religion is a congestion of the brain; the joy of the poet the thrill of the blood in the rupture of sense, and every good not only rises from, but hastens back into, the jaws of death and nothingness: a rainbow arch above a peccatorial chaos!

Thus Balzac, with all his force and fullness of talent, never rises one moment into the region of genius. For genius is, in its nature, positive and creative, and cannot exist where there is no heart to believe in realities. Neither can he have a permanent influence on a nation which is not thoroughly corrupt. He might for a while stagger an ingenuous mind which had not yet thought for itself. But this could not last. His unbelief makes his thought too shallow. He has not that power which a mind, only in part sophisticated, may retain, where the heart still beats warmly, though it sometimes beats amiss. While, patient, argue, as you will, where there is a sound spot in any human being, he cannot be made to believe that this is not a bad man, more than a temporary condition of his being, though one to which he may have become shamefully exposed by fault of inheritance, education, or his own carelessness.

Taken in his own way, we know no modern tragedist more powerful than Balzac's Eugene Grandet, "Sweet Pea," "Search after the Absolute," "Father Goriot." See there goodness, aspiration, the loveliest instincts, suffled, struggled by fate, in the form of our own brute nature—the fate of the ancient Prometheus was happiness to that of those who must pay for ever having believed there was divine fire in Heaven, by agonies of despair, and conscious degradation, unknown to those who began by believing man to be the most richly endowed of brutes—no more!

Balzac is admirable in his description of love, gesture. He has a keen sense of whatever is peculiar to the individual. Nothing in modern romance surpasses the death-scene of Father Goriot, the Parisian Lear, in the almost immortal life with which the parental instincts are displayed. And with equal precision and delicacy of shading he will paint the slightest play in the manners of some young girl.

"Seraphitus" is merely a specimen of his great powers of intellectual transposition. Amid the delight at the botanical riches of the new and elevated region in which he is traveling, we catch, faintly by echo, the hum and chuckle of the French materialist.

No more of him!—We leave him to his suicidal work.

An entirely opposite character, in every leading trait, yet bearing traces of the same influences, is the celebrated GEORGE SAND. It is probably the greatest proportion of readers that this writer is a woman, who writes under the name of a man. She is also known that she has not only broken the marriage bond, and, since that, formed other connections independent of the civil or ecclesiastical sanction, but that she first rose into notice through works which systematically assailed the present institution of marriage and the social bonds which are connected with it.

No facts are more adapted to startle free feeling of our community; but, since the works of Sand are read here, notwithstanding, and cannot fail to be so while they exert so important an influence abroad, it would be well they should be read intelligently, as to the circumstances of their birth, and their tendency.

George Sand we esteem to be a person of strong passions, but of original nobleness and a love of right sufficient to guide them all to the service of worthy aims. But she fell upon evil times. She was given in marriage according to the fashion of the old regime; she was taken from a convent where she had heard a great deal about the law of God and the example of Jesus, into a society where no vice was proscribed, if it would wear the cloak of hypocrisy. She found herself impatient of deception, and loudly called by passion; she yielded; but she could not do so, as others did, sinning against what she owned to be the rule of right, and the will of Heaven. She protested; she examined; she assailed. She hacked into the roots of things, and the bold sound of her axe called around her every face that finds a home amid the growths of civilization. Still she persisted. "If it be real," thought she, "it cannot be destroyed; so to what is false, the sooner it goes the better; and I, for one, had rather perish beneath its fall than hither into its shade."

SCHILLER puts into the mouth of Mary Stuart these words as her only plea: "The world knows the worst of me; and I may boast that, though I have erred, I am better than my reputation." Sand may say the same. All is open, noble; the free descriptions, the sophistry of passion are, at last, redeemed by a desire for truth as strong as ever beat in any heart. To the weak or unthinking the reading of such books may not be desirable, for only those who take exercise as men can digest strong meat. But to any one able to understand the position and circumstances, we believe this reading cannot fail of bringing good impulses, valuable suggestions, and it is quite free from that subtle miasma which taints so large a portion of French literature, not less since the Revolution than before. This we say to the foreign reader. To her own country Sand is a boon precious and prized, both as a warning and a leader, for which none there can be ungrateful.

She has dared to probe their festering wounds, and if they be not past all surgery, she is one who, most of any, helps toward a cure.

Would, indeed, the surgeon had come with quite clean hands! A woman of Sand's genius, as free, as bold, and pure from even the suspicion of error, might have filled an apostolic station among her people. Then with what force had come her cry, "If it be false, give it up; but, if it be true, keep to it—one or the other!"

But we have read all we wish to say upon this subject, lately uttered just from the quiver we could wish. It is such a woman, so unblemished in character, so high in aim, and pure in soul, that we, however, do not merely assail, but would build up. His anatomy is not intended to injure

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This is the secret of the deep interest he has awakened in this country that he shares a hope which is, half unconsciously to herself, stirring all her veins. It is not so warmly outspoken as in other lands, both because no such pervasive idea as yet can loudly for redress, and because private conservatism is here great, in proportion to the absence of authorized despotism. We are not disposed to quarrel with this; it is well for the value of new thoughts to be tested by a good deal of resistance. Opposition, if it does not preclude free discussion, is of use in educating men to know what they want. Only by intelligent men, exercised by thought and tried in virtue, can such measures as Sue proposes be carried out; and when such Associates present themselves in sufficient numbers, we have no fear but that the cause of Association, in its grander forms, will have fair play in America.

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This is the secret of the deep interest he has awakened in this country that he shares a hope which is, half unconsciously to herself, stirring all her veins. It is not so warmly outspoken as in other lands, both because no such pervasive idea as yet can loudly for redress, and because private conservatism is here great, in proportion to the absence of authorized despotism. We are not disposed to quarrel with this; it is well for the value of new thoughts to be tested by a good deal of resistance. Opposition, if it does not preclude free discussion, is of use in educating men to know what they want. Only by intelligent men, exercised by thought and tried in virtue, can such measures as Sue proposes be carried out; and when such Associates present themselves in sufficient numbers, we have no fear but that the cause of Association, in its grander forms, will have fair play in America.

As a writer, Sue shows his want of a high kind of imagination by his unshrinking portrait of physical horrors. We do not believe any man could look upon some things he describes and live. He is very powerful in his description of the workings of animal nature; especially when he speaks of them in animals merely, they have the simplicity of the lower kind with the more full expression of human nature. His pictures of women are of rare excellence, and it is observable that the more simple and pure the character is, the more justice he does to it. This shows that, whatever his career may have been, his heart is uncontaminated. Men do not describe so well, and fail entirely when he aims at one grand and simple enough for a great moral agent. His conceptions are strong, but in execution he is too melodramatic. Just compare his "Wandering Jew" with that of Beranger. The latter is as diamond compared with charcoal. Then, like all these writers who write in names that come out weekly or monthly, he abuses himself and his subject; he often musters the arrangement is false and mechanical.

The attitude of Sue at this moment imposing, as he stands, pen in hand—this his only weapon against an innumerable host of foes, the champion of purity, innocence and humanity, against superstition, selfishness and prejudice. When his works are forgotten, and for all their strong points and brilliant decorations, they may be long forgotten, still the writer's name shall be held in imperishable honor as the teacher of the ignorant, the guardian of the weak, a true Tribune for the people of his own time.

To sum up this imperfect account of their merits, I say De Vigny, a retiring figure, the gentleman, the solitary thinker, but, in his way, the efficient foe of false honor, and superstitious prejudice. Balzac is the heartiest surgeon, probing the wounds and describing the delirium of suffering men for the amusement of his students. Sand a grand, fertile, aspiring, but, in some measure, distorted and irregular nature. Sue a bold and glittering crusader, with endless ballads jangling in the silence of the night before the battle. They are much right and a good deal wrong; for instance, all, even Sand, who would lay down her life for the sake of truth, will let their virtuous characters practice stratagems, falsehood, and violence; in fact, do evil for the sake of good. They still show this taint of the old regime, and no wonder! La belle France has worn rouge so long that the purest mountain air will not, at once, or soon, restore the natural hues to her complexion. But they are fine figures, and all ruled by the wild spirit of the time. Led by that spirit, I see them moving on the troubled waters; they do not sink, and I trust they will find their way to the coasts where the new era will introduce new methods, in a spirit of nobler activity, wisdom, patience, and holier faith than the world has yet seen.

Will Balzac also see that shore, or has he only broken away the bars that hindered others from setting sail? We do not know. When we read an expression of such lovely innocence as the letter of the little country maidens to their Parisian brother (in Father Goriot), we hope; but presently we see him sneering behind the mask, and we fear. Let Frenchmen speak to this. They know best what disadvantages a Frenchman suffers under, and whether it is possible Balzac be alive, except in his eyes. Those, we know, are well alive.

To read these or any foreign works fairly, the reader must understand the national circumstances under which they were written. To use them worthily, he must know how to interpret them for the use of the Universe.

BEAUTIFUL BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG.—Messrs. Lane & Tippett of the Methodist Book Concern in this City, have recently published in the convenient and popular hand-book style, which for some time past has been so popular in England, a series of beautiful little works on Natural History, the titles of which are The Honey Bee, The Spider, The Ant, The Fly, The Flower, The Egg, The Nest, &c. &c. We believe they are all reprints from London editions, carefully revised, however, by Rev. D. P. Kidd, the Editor of the Juvenile and Sunday School Department of that concern. The same publishers have also just published, in the same neat style, The Jew among all Nations, We are Seven, Kingdom of Heaven among Children, Anna the Prophetess, Forty-two Children, Anna and Sophia, &c. These little books may safely be placed in the hands of children or youth—they are instructive and interesting, and so far as we have had leisure to examine them, entirely free from every taint of sectarianism.

HUNT'S MERCHANTS' MAGAZINE for February is before us. The following are the titles of the principal articles: "French Spoils of American Companies," "Sixth Census of the United States," "The Post Office Department," "The Railroad Movement," "Trade and Commerce of Brazil," "Resources of the Lackawanna Valley." Besides these there is the usual "Commercial Chronicle," "Mercantile Law Department," "Commercial Statistics," &c.

LITTLE'S LIVING AGE, Nos. 37, 38, 39, before us. "Luther, his Faith and Works," "Travel in Abyssinia," "Excerpts from 'Punch,'" "Life in London Lodgings," "Mr. Shell," "Confessions of a Monomaniac," &c. &c. are among their contents. Burgess, Stringer & Co., 222 Broadway, Graham, 160 Nassau-st., sell this capital summary of current British Literature.

THE GIPSEY'S WALTZ, arranged from the beautiful song of the Gipsy's Bride in the Bohemian Girl, is just published at the New Music Store of Van Gelder, 268 Bowery.

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